

From Mao Back to Confucius: China's Approaches to Development and Peace

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Abstract

Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong each had different visions for China. As a neo-Confucianist, Chiang embraced traditional culture, while his archrival Mao aimed to create an egalitarian socialist China with elements of Marxism. As a result of these two competing visions, Mainland China initially rejected Confucius; however, Mao's successors have invited him back during the last two decades. While China is moving full steam ahead towards modernization, it is also looking back at its own Confucian and Daoist traditions. Will the Sinicized Marxism and Confucianism work hand in hand to promote world development and peace? Or will they pose a conundrum for Chinese leaders?

If Confucius were alive, he might be shamed, even fearful, to live in 20th century China.¹ The New Culture Movement of the 1910s blamed him for the weakness and poverty the Chinese people then experienced. Calling for reassessment of all traditional values—with Beijing University as its center—the movement featured heated debates between two opposing positions: those who preferred incremental changes in Confucian traditions, and those who wanted to replace those teachings with Western values and beliefs, emulating a Bolshevik-like revolution. Chen Duxiu, the iconoclastic editor of the *New Youth Journal* and soon-to-be founder of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP),

shouted the slogan “Down with the Confucius Family Shop.” Other intellectuals proposed inviting two foreign concepts to China: “Mr. Democracy” and “Mr. Science.”

The land of Confucius faced a critical moment. Should China continue its old ways, an approach many denounced for the then existing state of the nation—politically weak, economically stagnant, and culturally conservative—or should it instead break with tradition and remake a new republic with progressive Western ideas such as human rights, freedom and equality?

Biography

Dr. Chunjuan Nancy Wei received her Ph.D. in political science and M.A. in public policy from Claremont Graduate University in Southern California. Her recent articles have been published in Yale Journal of International Affairs (in press) and the Southeast Review of Asian Studies, as well as a book chapter “The U.S. and China: The power of illusion” in the Alliance Curse. She is the coauthor of the book Zui Xin Meiguo Yao Lan (Survey of America) and co-translator of the book Wanquan Shagua: Qiu Zhi (The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting the Job You Want). She is currently writing a book on Ancient China's Thirty-Six Stratagems and the U.S. War on Terror.

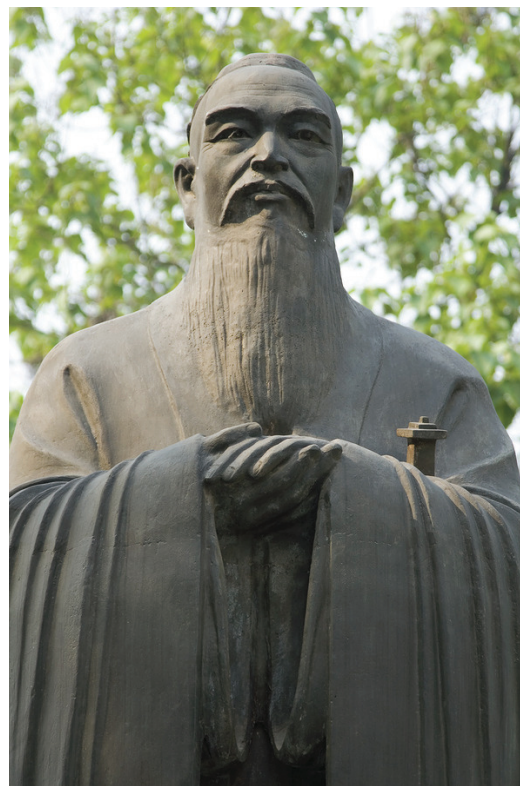
China's intelligentsia no doubt found itself divided in its Confucian legacies. The Kuomintang Party under Chiang Kai-shek made repeated efforts to revive Confucian values in the late 1920s and mid 1930s. When the party relocated to Taiwan, they brought Confucius with them, where he continues to be venerated as the Great Educator. Each year on Confucius' birthday (September 28), Taiwan holds ceremonies commemorating its Teacher's Day.

On the Mainland, Confucius experienced a turbulent period. The CCP banished Confucius and made itself a new god of Mao Zedong Thought, a mixture of localized Marxism, Leninism and Stalinism. A military genius and a fine poet, Mao unified the Mainland while retaining most of the territory the Qing Dynasty had ruled, including Tibet and Xinjiang. Yet Mao's economic policies, notably the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, brought disaster to the country. Tired of repeated political movements, the people never quite forgot the teachings and influence of Confucius. Authorities realized this nostalgia presented an opportunity to solidify its rule. Accordingly, Confucius has returned to Mainland China, albeit with a modern twist.

A Sketch of the Confucian Legacy

Confucius lived at about the same time as Socrates and Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha), a time that German philosopher Karl Jaspers referred to as the axial age.² The China that Confucius experienced was one divided into a myriad of minor states warring with each other, the

closest modern equivalent being the Warlord Period *sans* the presence of foreigners. The great educator perceived a society wrapped in a vicious cycle of poverty,



Ancient statue of Confucius, Qufu Shandong Province, China

violence and chaos. With a sense of mission to restore social order, he traveled across borders lobbying rulers to live virtuously while caring for their people. These leaders generally greeted Confucius and his message with deaf ears. In his lifetime, the philosopher recruited some 3,000 students and inculcated in them the importance of personality, rituals, ethics, government and self-cultivation. Recognizing his profound teachings, the Chinese revered him posthumously as Kong Fuzi, meaning Master Kong and Latinized as Confucius.

It is important to note that Confucianism is not a religion, *per se*; rather, it is a system of thought and conduct concerned with self-cultivation, moral order, statecraft, and proper relationships among human beings. Rich and complex, Confucianism adopts as its core and spirit humanity (仁 *ren*), righteousness (义 *yi*), and peace (和 *he*), with rituals (礼 *li*) and music (乐 *yue*) as its external manifestations. These ideals and practices permeate all aspects of Chinese life. The Confucian focus on learning and the concepts of filial piety and harmony are central to its practice.

Emphasis on Education and Learning

Many sayings and aphorisms contained in Confucius' *Analects* still guide many Chinese in their daily lives. For instance, Confucius viewed education as a right for all: "In education there are no class distinctions."³ When asked what to do with China's huge population, Confucius instructed that the people should be "enriched" and "educated."⁴ He saw learning as a great enjoyment: "To learn and at due times to repeat what one has learnt, is that not after all a pleasure?"⁵ He also stressed the importance of learning from one another: "When walking in a party of three, I always have teachers. I can select the good qualities of the one for imitation, and the bad ones of the other and correct them in myself."⁶ He accentuated the significance of thinking in the process of acquiring knowledge: "Learning without thinking is labor lost; thinking without learning is perilous."⁷ He believed the fruits of learning would

leave a person at peace: "Having heard the Way [Dao] in the morning, one may die content in the evening."⁸

The central importance given to education and learning positively influenced the ancient Chinese state and proved instrumental in fostering China's prominent status in the world at that time. For example, the Tang Dynasty (618-906) established a competitive civil service examination, the world's first meritocratic promotion system, which selected moral scholar-officials to run the state. However, this system was not without its problems. One notable drawback was the Confucian classics, the core underpinning of the Tang Dynasty's education, had little practical relevance to daily life, a feature limiting upward mobility. This regimen provided limited material or spiritual inducements for trade, scientific exploration or technological advancement.⁹ Reformers finally abolished the examination prior to the collapse of Qing Dynasty.

The Concept of Filial Piety (孝)

Before the 1911 Revolution, the values of the typical Chinese family centered around filial piety found in Confucian teachings. "A young man's duty," said Confucius, "is to be filial to his parents at home and respectful to his elders abroad."¹⁰ While his parents were alive, the man was supposed to serve and provide, even wine and dine them, if he could afford it. Upon a parent's death, the child was required to observe mourning for three years at home. Furthermore, it was simple to determine whether or not a

son was filial, even after the father's passing. "If, for three years, he makes no changes to his father's ways," said Confucius, "he can be said to be a good son."¹¹ While instrumental in preserving ancestral wisdom, this dogma served to prevent social change and growth.

Confucian teachings laid the foundations for Chinese tradition of taking care of parents in their old age, removing a major social problem for Chinese society. However, it has created many drawbacks in practice. Distinctive responsibilities delineated between men and women¹² resulted in the subjugation of females to males. A strict pecking order was enforced among siblings.¹³ Marriages were often dictated by parents and matchmakers. The killing of a father by a son or a husband by a wife drew longer and harsher punishments than that done to a son by the father or to a wife by the husband. The idea of equality was foreign to Confucian families, scholars and officials, resulting in unfair burdens being placed on women, subordinates and inferiors. Lu Xun, an influential writer in the Republican era (1911-1949), called this self-sustaining practice a "man-eating" system.

Because the Chinese concept of the state is built upon families, evidenced by the term 國家 (nation families), even kings—those "beneath one (the heaven) but above millions"—could not escape filial duty. Usually the emperor succeeded to the throne upon his father's death. According to the Confucian requirement, he had not only to mourn and perpetuate his father's policies, but had to obey the

whims of his surviving mother; accordingly, this gave the empress dowager (and often her family as well) enormous political influence.¹⁴ This doctrine in effect crippled the ability of the emperor to govern independently.

In essence, while Confucian instructions on learning encouraged scholarship, filial piety suppressed the nation's creativity and made the Chinese family structure ultimately more rigid than necessary.

Peace, Harmony and Governance

Confucius instructed rulers that "To govern is to set things right. If you begin by setting yourself right, who will dare to deviate from the right?"¹⁵ The Master set a high standard for leaders: "If the ruler himself is upright, all will go well without orders. But if he himself is not upright, even though he gives orders they will not be obeyed."¹⁶ Confucius taught that governors should lead by example, being benevolent and virtuous. "Virtue never stands alone," he said. "It is bound to have neighbors."¹⁷

Dismayed by the chaos of his time, Confucius attached great importance to social stability, peace and harmony. "In carrying out rituals, it is harmony that is prized."¹⁸ The great philosopher called for tolerance and plurality: "A gentleman seeks harmony but not uniformity."¹⁹ Confucian harmony focused mainly on peace in human relations and between man and nature. To restore order, Confucius called for rectification of names, rather than making a Constitution to regulate each member's social behavior. In his view, the

root cause of the social ills of his time was the confusion of names: “When names are incorrect, the words will not ring true.”²⁰ Accordingly, he advised statesmen to “Let the ruler be ruler, the minister minister, the father father and the son son.”²¹ After the name of relationships is rectified and every member of society knows his position and duties, all the emperor should do is “to have done nothing (*wu wei*) and yet have the state well-governed.”²²

What is an ideal government according to Confucian teachings? Rather than providing tedious statistics and getting bogged down in technicalities, the Master said that “[Good government is obtained] when those who are near are made happy, and those who are far off are attracted.” The beauty of his answer lies in Waley’s translated version, that “when the near approve and the distant approach,”²³ a good government can be quantified, as evidenced by a leader’s approval ratings and the numbers of legal and illegal immigrants.

Clearly, Confucian teachings are multi-dimensional and exist on many levels. Like many of his contemporary philosophers in the West, he was a great reformer, a brilliant educator, and a noble person. Sadly to himself and his adherents, the Master died disappointed that his teachings were ignored by the rulers of his day.

In the last 2,500 years, Confucianism has waxed and waned in influence, contending with dozens of other native and foreign schools and religions. During the

Han Dynasty, Confucianism became state doctrine. Drawing on Daoism and Buddhism—two other main streams of traditional Chinese culture—it evolved during the Song Dynasty into a rigid set of ideologies emphasizing hierarchy and absolute obedience. Institutionalized and internalized through civil service examinations, the neo-Confucianist interpretations proved instrumental in making the Middle Kingdom agrarian, arrogant, inward-looking, and resistant to change. Such a Confucian China would be doomed in its first encounters with the West.

An Uneasy Engagement: Confucius Collides with Marx

Following the Opium War of 1839, China entered a period of decay, foreign invasion and domination, an era characterized by unequal treaties, extra-territoriality and national division. The Century of Humiliation (1839-1949) cast doubts among the intelligentsia regarding the usefulness of Confucian thought and teachings. Some radicals, including the Communist founders Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, fiercely denounced Confucius, demanding the Master meet and contend with a foreign rival: Karl Marx.

Like Confucius, Marx travelled across borders, preaching his political economy and theory. When his works were first introduced to China in 1899, it was 16 years after his death. Moreover, having lived in England for some time, the Chinese mistook the German philosopher for a Briton.²⁴ Regardless, the Chinese pondered his revolutionary document *The*

Communist Manifesto, coauthored with Friedrich Engels and published in 1848. In the *Manifesto*, he declared that existing human history was not the Confucian ideal of harmony, but “the history of class struggles.” To paraphrase the English poet John Donne, Marxism would be the new ideology that called into doubt all Chinese traditions and values.²⁵

What was Marx proclaiming? He shared with Confucius the common concern about the prosperity and well-being of the people. In fact, historian Guo Moruo in his allegorical meeting of the two great political thinkers entitled *Marx Enters the Confucian Temple*, declares the two philosophers as mutually complementary.²⁶ However, while Confucius concerned himself primarily with self-cultivation and social order, Marx cared more about the oppressed working class. From these separate vantage points, each struggled with central, universal questions. Why are the workers getting poorer? Confucius would have faulted the leader as incapable of being in power. Marx suggested a different path: the overthrow of the existing system through revolution, declaring, “Proletariats of the world, unite!”

Where are human societies heading toward? The two shared similar ends. Confucius pointed to an orderly “harmonious world” (*da tong* 大同) with no states or racial distinctions,²⁷ while Marx posited a stateless, classless society where wealth distribution would follow the principle “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” However, they differed on means and preconditions. The Confucian Age of Great

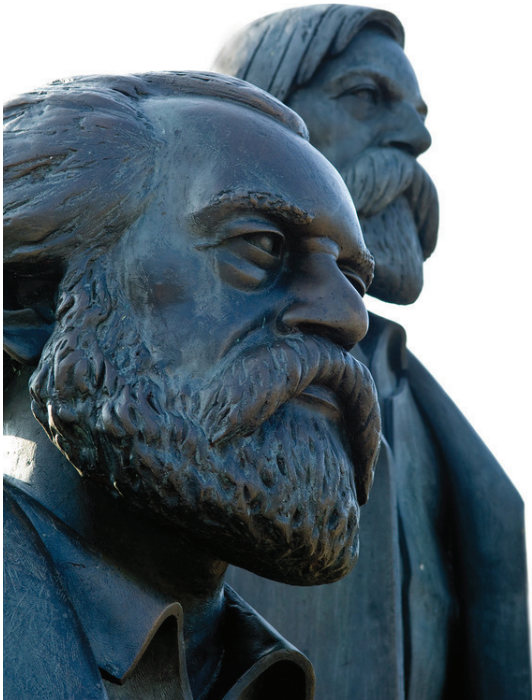
Peace (another translation of *da tong*) was inward-looking, through self-cultivation in virtues and rituals, while the Marxist ideal was to be achieved through class struggles and the dictatorship of the pro-

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letariat. Further, while every member in the Confucian society had to be virtuous, Marxist utopia would require all members to give up self-interest.

Was Marxism an appealing philosophy for the Chinese? Not particularly. Like the trendy movements of anarchism, liberalism, socialism, social Darwinism, and democracy, communism contended as only one of the many ideologies battling for the Chinese mind and heart. Intellectuals in the Middle Kingdom quickly discovered that Marxism proved more directly relevant to the urban industrial workers of Europe, not the poor peasants in their own country. In addition, they felt that Marx and Engels’ prediction—that the socialist revolution would occur in developed capitalist countries including Great Britain and France—was irrelevant to China’s circumstance. However, the

revolutionaries found Lenin's interpretation of Marxism a powerful tool to mobilize the masses. Instead of preaching a communist utopia, Lenin focused on nationalism and anti-imperialism, a prescrip-



*Statue of Marx and Engels, Marx-Engels-Forum
Alexanderplatz, Berlin*

tion that immediately inspired those who sought to redress the effects of Western and Japanese colonialism. By not viewing the Chinese peasant society as a burden, Lenin suggested to the communists that the peasants constituted “the weakest link of imperialism.”²⁸

Was Marxism-Leninism immediately embraced by the Chinese? Not really. The task was neither simple nor straightforward. It would need foreign-trained intellectuals such as Lu Xun who fiercely attacked the old to make room for the new.

It took the Russian October Revolution (1917) and the Soviet-sponsored Communist International (ComIntern) to prepare the Chinese for the practicality of Communism. The Japanese invasion also proved essential in distracting the attention of the Kuomintang Party, an entity keen to worship Confucius. Even so, the moment demanded a charismatic leader as a necessity, for as the Chinese saying goes, “Turbulent times make heroes.”²⁹ Mao emerged as the one Chinese leader who eventually betrayed Confucius by embracing Marx. Or so it seemed.

Enter Mao: Confucian Rebel

Born in Hunan in 1893, Mao Zedong practiced Buddhism at a young age due to his mother's influence. Like many children of his time, Mao began his education by memorizing the *Analects* and the Four Classics. His arranged marriage, the strict schooling of the Confucian teachings, and the books he read on peasant uprisings and western ideologies, undoubtedly contributed to his rebellious nature. An ancient civilization “carved up like a melon” by foreigners was a heart-rending wound to his psyche. Like many intellectuals of his time, Mao stood convinced that Leninism could save his country. Yet, unlike his Moscow-trained colleagues, the so-called 28 Bolsheviks who dogmatized Marxism and Leninism, Mao was more practical and less fervent. He always stressed the importance of linking Marxist theory with Chinese practice.

What was Mao's attitude towards Confucius? Professor Xu Quanxing of the Beijing-based Communist Party School, the

author of *Mao Zedong and Confucius*, reveals a Mao who treated Confucius differently at different stages of his life. It was well-known that Mao confessed to Edgar Snow in 1936 that he visited and paid homage to the home and grave of “the sage” in Qufu during the year of the May Fourth Movement.³⁰ Xu insists that Mao’s familiarity with the classics and traditional Chinese culture paved the way for the Sinicization of Marxism.³¹ His conclusion seems reasonable considering Mao’s talk in October 1938, in which he emphasized the importance for Communist Party members to study Chinese heritage:

We, the Chinese race, have thousands of years of unique history and many treasures, to which we are still pupils. Contemporary China has grown out of the China of the past; we are Marxist in our historical approach and must not lop off our history. We should sum up the history from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen and take with us the valuable legacy. This is important for guiding the great movement of today.³²

With the ascendancy of the CCP in 1949, Mao had the state power to implement a series of nationalist initiatives, and to create a Marxist China that was to surpass the power of the British and rival that of the Americans. He grew to be more critical of Confucius for not paying attention to production and economic activities, while acknowledging there was “some truth” in his teachings. It was during the Cultural Revolution that Mao initiated the largest-scale anti-Confucian movement in

Chinese history. Red guards destroyed temples honoring Confucius, labeling them symbols of feudalism and revisionism. Many historic Confucian sites and relics were also damaged or destroyed. They denounced Confucian thought with the convenient excuse that the sage had supported the slavery system, culminating in the so-called “Pi-Lin pi-Kong” [批林批孔, Criticize Lin Bao and Confucius] campaign of 1973. The founder of the PRC, Mao allegedly directed the campaign by saying that “Confucius has to be criticized.”³³ Other evidence of Mao’s complete rejection of Confucius can be found in a poem he wrote professing that “Confucianism is chaff in essence, albeit it enjoys high reputation.”³⁴ In spite of these denunciations, Xu insists that Mao’s latter-stage radical attitude, as harsh as it was, did not represent Mao’s life-time attitudes toward Confucius. In fact, Xu concludes Mao was a Marxist who never completely rejected Chinese tradition and Confucianism.

Professor Huiyun Feng of Utah State University appears to support Xu’s view. Her research indicates that Mao’s decision-making style in wars, along with those of his comrades-in-arms and successors, followed more of the Confucian beliefs and norms than Marxism. Using content study and sequential game analysis, Feng examined six Communist leaders in three major wars—the Korean War (1951-3), the Sino-Indian War (1963), and the Sino-Vietnamese War (1979)—and concluded that the goal of China’s leaders was not spreading communism through the world but protecting China’s sur-

vival.³⁵



Statue of Mao Zedong, Zhongshan Square, Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China

Was Mao a Marxist then? He certainly embraced Engels' dialectical materialism and Marxist historical materialism. Thanks to the falsification of Marxist prediction that socialism would succeed in advanced industrialized countries, Mao, just as Lenin and Stalin, added his own distinctive development to Marxist revolutionary strategy. His conception of the "new-democratic revolution," along with his signature tactic "encircling the cities from the countryside," was not to be found in Marxist-Leninist books. According to an informed colleague of mine, Mao's most important contribution was that "he put China back on the world map," yet, the untold political, social and economic disasters are also his legacy to

the Chinese state. In spite of this, Mao's Cultural Revolution did not kill China; instead, it ironically made her stronger. To undo these wounds, Mao's successors found themselves forced to blaze a path that is uniquely Chinese but with "Marxist" characteristics.

Post-Mao Confucius Redux: From the "Harmonious Society" to the "Harmonious World"

Post-Mao Chinese regimes have made efforts to distance themselves from Marx by embracing Confucius. In 1987, the first International Conference on Confucian Studies was permitted to be held in Qufu. Weeks after the crackdown on the Tiananmen Student Movement in 1989, the government quietly endorsed a celebration of the sage's birthday. The then-President Jiang Zemin appeared at the party, quite unannounced.³⁶

Born in the 1920s, Jiang was influenced by traditional Chinese values. In a Confucian society that overly-stressed the importance of a name, Jiang's given name was indirectly taken from the Confucius teaching that a gentleman should "benefit the people."³⁷ Jiang confessed that he was influenced by three types of education: the teachings of Confucius and Mencius; the "bourgeois" scientific accomplishments, and Marxism.³⁸ As a trained engineer, Jiang did make an effort to incorporate traditional thinking into Communist political theory. In 2000, he proposed his theory of Marxism in China with the "Three Represents." In it, the CCP would represent advanced productive forces, progressive cultures and the fundamental

interests of the Chinese people. Unlike the Maoist conviction that Communists represent only the interests of the urban workers and peasants, Jiang expanded his constituency to the entire Chinese people. His biographer Robert Kuhn notes that the “Three Represents” signaled a return to traditional Chinese culture, a conscious effort to blend Confucianism with Chinese Marxism.³⁹

Jiang Zemin was probably the first top Chinese leader since the Cultural Revolution to publicly acknowledge Confucius as a positive influence in the PRC. While visiting Hungary in 1995, Jiang remarked at the Chinese embassy that Confucius was “a great educator in ancient China,” quoting him saying that “real knowledge is to know the extent of one’s ignorance.”⁴⁰ President Hu Jintao continued Jiang’s fondness for quoting Confucius. On April 29, 2005, in welcoming Lien Chan, Chairman of Taiwan’s Kuomintang Party, Hu said, “When a friend comes from afar visiting us, is that not delightful?” “Your trip to the mainland is a milestone,” the President said, “not only in the CCP-KMT relationship, but also in the cross-Taiwan Strait relations.”⁴¹ Later, the two leaders proposed social and international programs reflecting the harmonious society aspects of Confucian ideals.

A Harmonious Society and the “*Bu Zheteng*” Doctrine

The idea of building a harmonious society was outlined in the 4th Plenary Session of the 16th CCP Party Congress held in September 2004. Aimed to correct pollution, regional disparities and unequal distribu-

tion of wealth, it was viewed as a revolutionary change in Deng Xiaoping’s approach of “allowing some to get rich.” In addition to embracing the Confucian concept of harmony, President Hu included elements of democracy and a market economy. In 2007, at the 17th Party Congress, Hu reiterated that his party would work hard to “develop the socialist market economy, socialist democracy, an advanced socialist culture and a harmonious socialist society, and make China a prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious modern socialist country.”⁴²

The “*bu zheteng*” doctrine, which Hu articulated in off-the-cuff remarks during late 2008 while commemorating the 30th anniversary of China’s reform, immediately caught the world’s attention because journalists had a difficult time defining or translating the concept. “*Zheteng*” is a colloquial term with negative connotations used in Northern China. In essence, it refers to a person who keeps frittering around by doing things over and over again, ending up with no good result. Some of Mao’s policies fit perfectly with such a description. In an attempt to find solutions to China’s poverty and backwardness, he tried new programs from “Three Anti, Five Anti” to the extreme “Great Leap Forward” and the “Cultural Revolution,” bringing China to near bankruptcy. With the promise of “*bu zheteng*” (不折腾), Hu implied that his government has learned from Mao’s mistakes and would not engage in any self-consuming political movements or any self-inflicted social and economic setbacks.⁴³ The “*bu zheteng*” principle is

somewhat similar to the Confucius' "doing nothing" philosophy in that it wisely advocates positive avoidance of potentially destructive actions for the sake of activity alone, when inaction might yield a better result.

A Harmonious World

President Jiang was the first high level official to blend the harmony concept with China's foreign policy. During his speech at the Bush Library in Texas on October 24, 2002, he expounded the concept of "harmony without uniformity" in the context of U.S.-China relationship:

Harmony promotes co-existence and co-prosperity whereas differences foster mutual complementation and mutual support. Harmony without sameness is an important principle in the development of all social affairs and relationships and in guiding people's conduct and behavior. Indeed, it is the essential factor of the harmonious development of all civilizations.⁴⁴

To take the Confucian concept of harmony to a new dimension, China declared in the Preface of its *National Defense White Paper* for 2006 that it "pursues a road of peaceful development, and endeavors to build, together with other countries, a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity."⁴⁵ In his visits to rival India in late 2006, Hu Jintao conveyed a similar message that his China would return to the Confucian ideal of a constructive role in promoting peace and development in South Asia. Hu expressed

his wishes that the two neighbors jointly pursue peace and prosperity, quoting Confucius as saying that "One who wishes to be established seeks to establish others; One who wishes success helps others to achieve success."⁴⁶

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Two major policy initiatives of Hu's development and peace strategies are worth mentioning; namely, the Confucius Institutes and the Overseas Youth Volunteers (OYV). Emulating the American "Peace Corps," China created its own OYV program in 2002, sending the first team of volunteers to Laos. With a very competitive screening process, the OYV recruits college graduates 20 to 35 of age to be dispatched to Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia to teach Mandarin, Confucianism, Chinese calligraphy, medicine, martial arts (*wushu*), shadow boxing, computer skills, and agricultural technologies. The volunteers' services are not limited to these areas; surgeons and nurses, music teachers, and agricultural graduates are among the other volunteers.⁴⁷ The seven-year-old program has placed hundreds of Chinese youth in more than 50 countries. Hu's other initiative, the Confucius Insti-

tutes (CIs), are not-for-profit organizations under the Beijing-headquartered Office of Chinese Language Council International, or its Chinese abbreviation Hanban. As the British Council, the French Alliance Française, and the German Goethe-Institut were established to promote respective national cultures and languages, the CIs are devoted to teaching Mandarin and promoting Chinese culture abroad. Due to China's growing economic power, an estimated 100 million non-Chinese will have learned the language by 2010, requiring 5 million Mandarin teachers. To tap into the surging demand (and to counter the "China threat" thesis promulgated in the West), Beijing plans to set up 1,000 CIs worldwide by 2020, projecting an image of China that is Confucian and peace-loving. The first Confucius Institute debuted in late 2004 in Seoul, Korea. Since then, 396 CIs or Classrooms have been established in 87 countries and regions as of October 2009, 124 of which are in Europe and 65 in the United States alone.⁴⁸

In the U.S., Confucius used to be a cultural phenomenon in the China-towns or Chinese enclaves. Today, he has increasingly served as a bridge among Eastern and Western cultures. Since its debut at the University of Maryland in 2004, Confucius Institutes are embraced in dozens of colleges and communities; currently there are 65 such institutes or classrooms in the United States. In September 2009, the state of California established its Confucius Day, while the PRC hailed a great statute of Confucius it gave to the City of Houston as a symbol of China-US friendship. A month later, U.S. Congress

adopted a resolution commemorating the 2560th anniversary of the birth of Confucius. These events are harbingers that Confucian China and the United States may, over time, actually find more common interests in the realm of political and cultural values.

China's Future: Reconciling Marx and Confucius

How does Confucius—the great philosopher and educator who suffered unpopularity in China for nearly a century—suddenly become one of the most prominent cultural icons for the Party-State? The prevailing explanation is that Confucianism provides a “magic recipe for marrying authoritarian politics with capitalistic prosperity.”⁴⁹ In today's money-driven society when mass incidents (the Chinese government euphemism for large-scale protests) are occurring every day, a Confucianism that promotes hierarchy, obedience and respect for authority is conducive to Hu Jintao's goal of creating a “harmonious society.”

While this interpretation is largely true, it has overlooked one important variable: Marxism has failed in Russia and Eastern Europe, but in China it has been absorbed into the traditional culture. What has caused the discrepancy? According to Shaorong Huang, professor of English and Communication with University of Cincinnati, Sinicized Marxism and Confucian traditions share at least three important similarities. They both emphasize human centrality and self-cultivation; both attach importance to the unification of

theory and practice; and finally, though authoritarian, both promote humane governance.⁵⁰ Given the three important connections, it is not difficult to understand how Hu Jintao might be able to deliver a speech praising his predecessor's "Three Represents" as Marxism developed to suit China's new reality. Hu said, "Public opinion determines whether a political party or a government will rise or fall. For a Marxist party to win the people's support and thus to be invincible, its theories, policies, and actions must be in accordance with the people's fundamental interests."⁵¹

Commenting on Gorbachev's failure to understand the risks of reform, British historian Robert Service lamented that "the edifice of communism was a tautly interconnected piece of architecture," and that "the removal of any wall, ceiling or doorway in the edifice carried with it the danger of structural collapse."⁵² Fully aware of the risk, the China of recent decades had no intention of following and copying the Soviet system. Rather than rejecting Mao, the PRC founder, Deng Xiaoping instead issued a verdict of "70% right and 30% wrong." He avoided making major changes to the communist edifice. Indeed, his successors simply brought in Confucian bricks and tiles to strengthen the building, and repainted the exterior with sickles and hammers. Though messy, political expediency called for extraordinary measures.

President Jiang was the first to clean up the "tangle" of that expediency. A resourceful leader, his approach suggested a wedding or, in the words of his biogra-

pher, the building of "a new hybrid system of Confucian moral philosophy and Marxist political theory."⁵³ This is a daunting task because Confucius has a clear advantage. As Australian diplomat Reg Little observed, "the length, diversity, continuity and extensive records of Confucian culture give it [China] a character more formidable, pervasive and unifying as a political, social, economic and spiritual influence than any of the Abrahamic religions, whether Judaism, Christianity or Islam."⁵⁴ For China, it is much easier to go back than to move forward. Indeed, to do so only honors the Master's counsel: "Study the past if you would define the future."

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4. Ibid, p. 35 (XIII: 9).
5. Arthur Waley (Tr.), *The Analects* (Alfred A. Knopf: Everyman's Library, 2000), p.75 (I: 1). *Xue er shi xi zhi, bu yi yue hu*, 学而时习之, 不亦乐乎?
6. De Bary, et al., p. 25 (VII: 21). *San ren xing bi you wo shi yan. Ze qi shan zhe er cong zhi, qi bu shan zhe er gai zhi* 三人行, 必有我师焉。择其善者而从之, 其不善者而改之.
7. De Bary, et al., p. 26 (II: 15). *Xue er bu si ze wang, si er bu xue ze dai* 学而不思则罔, 思而不学则殆.
8. De Bary, et al., p. 25 (IV: 8). *Zhao wen dao xi si ke ye* 朝闻道, 夕死可矣.
9. June Tefuel Dreyer, *China's Political System: Modernization and Tradition* (6th ed., New York: Pearson/Longman, 2008), pp.38-42.
10. De Bary, et al., p.26 (I: 6).
11. D.C. Lau (Tr.), *Confucius: the analects* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1992), pp. 60-61 (I: 11).
12. This is called “*Nan nu you bie*” 男女有别.
13. “*Zhang you you xu*” 长幼有序.
14. Empress dowagers and regents Lu of Han Dynasty, Wu Zetian of Tang Dynasty and Ci Xi of Qing Dynasty were prominent examples. They assumed power behind the throne after their husbands' deaths.
15. De Bary, et al., p.34 (XII: 17). *Zheng zhe, zheng ye. Zi shuai yi zheng, shu gan bu zheng?* 政者, 正也。子帅以正, 孰敢不正?
16. Ibid, p.34 (XIII: 6).
17. Lau, p.75 (IV: 25). *De bu gu, bi you lin* 德不孤, 必有邻.
18. *Li zhi yong, he wei gui* 礼之用, 和为贵 (I:12), re-translated by Au-

- thor after referring to Lau, p.61; Waley, p.78.
19. *He er bu tong* 和而不同 (XIII: 23), re-translated by Author. Here the concept “*tong*” can also be translated into “conformity,” “sameness,” “partisanship,” and “identity.”
 20. *Ming bu zheng ze yan bu shun* 名不正，则言不顺 (XIII: 3), re-translated by Author.
 21. *Jun jun, chen chen, fu fu zi zi* 君君，臣臣，父父，子子 (XII: 11), re-translated by Author.
 22. De Bary, et al., p.35 (XV: 4).
 23. Waley, p.165 (XIII: 16). *Jin zhe yue, yuan zhe lai*, 近者悦，远者来.
 24. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), p.260.
 25. It comes from John Donne’s poem “And new philosophy calls all in doubt, the element of fire is quite put out; the Sun is lost, and the earth, and no mans wit can well direct him where to look for it.” (*An Anatomy Of The World*, <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/an-anatomy-of-the-world/>)
 26. Guo Moruo, 郭沫若, “Ma Kesi jin wen miao” 马克思进文庙 [Marx Enters the Confucian Temple], *Hongshui* 洪水, Vol 1, No.7, January 1, 1926. <http://www.zhongguosixiang.com/redirect.php?tid=18478&goto=lastpost>
 27. Kang Youwei, a great believer in Confucius, explained the “*da tong*” (大同) ideals: “There will be a day when everything throughout the earth, large or small, far or near, will be like one. There will be no longer any nations, no more racial distinctions, customs will be everywhere the same. With this uniformity will come the Age of Great Peace.” See De Bary, et al., p.733. For more information on “*da tong*,” see *Book of Rites*.
 28. Mark Borthwick, *Pacific century: the emergence of modern Pacific Asia* (2nd ed.), (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), p.179-185.
 29. *Shi shi zao yingxiong* 时势造英雄.
 30. Edgar Snow, *Red star over China* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p.152.
 31. Xu Quanxing 许全兴, *Mao Zedong yu Kong Fuzi: Makesi zhu yi Zhongguo hua ge an yan jiu* 毛泽东与孔夫子: 马克思主义中国化个案研究 [Mao Zedong and Confucius: Case studies of Sinicization of Marxism], (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, 2003).

32. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* 毛泽东选集, Vol. 2 第二卷, (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社), p.534, re-translated by Author.
33. Roderick MacFarquhar & Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's last revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), p.367.
34. This is a line in Mao's poem to Guo Moruo written in August 1973, entitled "Du 'fengjian lun:' cheng guo lao 读〈封建论〉呈郭老 [To Guo Moruo: On Feudalism]. *Kong xue ming gao shi bi kang* 孔学名高实秕糠。
35. Huiyun Feng, *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decisionmaking: Confucianism, Leadership and War*, (New York: Routledge, 2007).
36. William Theodore De Bary, *The trouble with Confucianism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).
37. (*Hui ze cang sheng* 惠泽苍生, "cang sheng" meaning "min", the masses).
38. Robert Lawrence Kuhn, *The man who changed China: The life and legacy of Jiang Zemin* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004), p.26.
39. Ibid, p.562.
40. Ibid, p. 269.
41. "Hu Jintao zai renmin dahuitang huijian lian zhan" 胡锦涛在人民大会堂会见连战 [Hu Jintao Meeting with Lien Chan in the Great Hall of the People], *Sina News*, April 29, 2005, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2005-04-29/15006530655.shtml>
42. Hu Jintao, "Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China" (Part VII), October 15, 2007, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm>
43. Originated from a northern dialect of "bie xia zheteng," the phrase does not have a good English equivalent. Western media have used the following versions "not getting sidetracked", "not flip-flopping", and even "not swaying back and forth", and "not dithering," but none of these has captured the gist of Hu's talk.
44. "Speech by President Jiang Zemin at George Bush Presidential Library," *Chinese Embassy Website*, October 24, 2002, <http://www.chinese-embassy.no/eng/dtxw/t110222.htm>.
45. *National Defense White Paper for 2006*, the Preface, (Beijing, China: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, December 29, 2006),

- <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/book/194487.htm>
46. “Hu Jintao xindeli yan jiang,” 胡锦涛新德里演讲 [Hu Jintao’s Speech at New Delhi], East- Day.com, November 22, 2006, <http://news.eastday.com/eastday/node81741/node81762/node173120/u1a2462007.html>. *Ji yu li er li ren, ji yu da er da ren* 己欲立而立人, 己欲达而达人 (VI: 26), re-translated by Author.
47. “Zhongguo tese de hepingdui” 中国特色的和平队 [Peace Corp with Chinese characteristics], Volunteers BBS, October 29, 2007, http://rss.xinhuanet.com/newsc/politics/2007-10/29/content_6956348.htm; “China to Send More Volunteers to Africa,” *China Daily*, February 15, 2007, <http://chinagate.cn/english/news/50115.htm>; For the law regulating the Overseas Youth Volunteers, see <http://www.lawinfochina.com/Law/displayModeTwo.asp?id=3821&keyword=>
48. “‘China threat’ fear countered by culture,” *People’s Daily online*, May 29, 2006, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200605/29/eng20060529_269387.html; Wangluo Kongzi Xueyuan 网络孔子学院 [Confucius online] http://college.chinese.cn/en/node_1979.htm; “Confucius Institute: promoting language, culture and friendliness,” *Xinhua Net*, October 2, 2006, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-10/02/content_5521722.htm
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50. Shaorong Huang, “Communicate Heritage: Political and Cultural Similarities between Chinese Marxism and Confucian Tradition,” *China Media Research*, 2(2), (2006), pp.94-102.
51. “Hu Jintao zai sange daibiao yantaohui shang de zhongyao jianhua” 胡锦涛在“三个代表”研讨会上的重要讲话 [Hu Jintao’s speech at the “Three Represents” Campaign], July 1, 2003 <http://www.hnass.com.cn/html/Dir/2006/03/30/00/01/89.htm>. Translated by the author.
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53. Kuhn, p.439.
54. Reg Little, “The Beijing games, Confucius and the very great US depression,” *New Dawn*, No. 108, (May-June 2008), <http://www.newdawnmagazine.com/Article/>

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